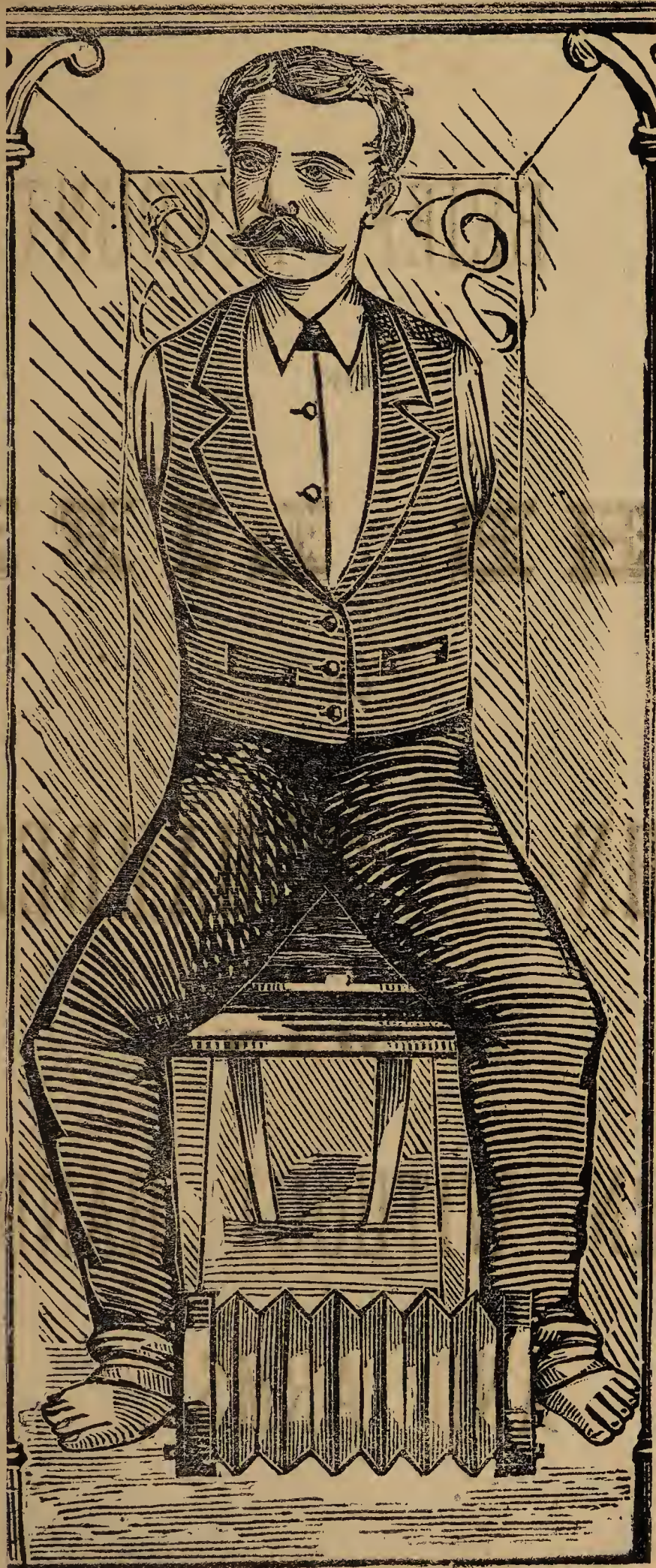


A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE

LIFE OF JOHN CHAMBERS



BORN WITHOUT HANDS OR ARMS.
A MAN

PLAYING THE CONCERTINA WITH HIS FEET.

A BRIEF ACCOUNT

OF

THE LIFE

OF

JOHN * CHAMBERS,

A MAN

BORN WITHOUT HANDS

AND ARMS.

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JOHN CHAMBERS

was born in the City of London, in June, 1850.

He is one of a family of six, and both his parents are still living.

This strange freak of nature is fully accounted for by a sudden shock his mother received some months before his birth.

In explaining this more fully, we cannot do better than re-print the account as it appeared in the *Lancet*, on the 19th October, 1850, written by Mr. R. DAVIES, M.R.C.S.

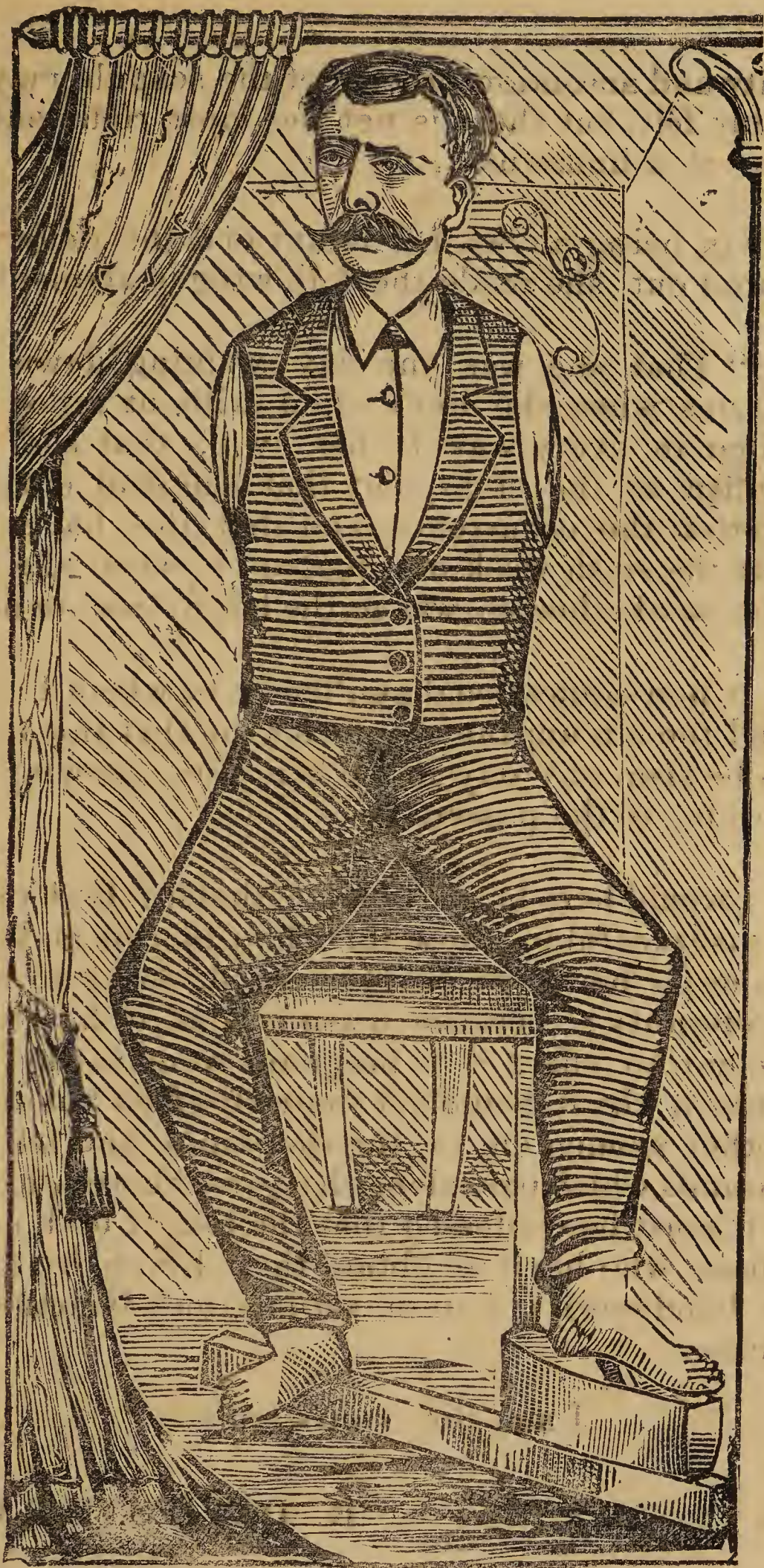
“LAMENTABLE EFFECTS OF MENTAL EMOTION OF THE MOTHER ON THE FŒTUS IN UTERO.”

To the Editor of the Lancet.

“Sir,—The question whether the mental emotions of the mother can influence the child in utero has been debated from time immemorial, some arguing for and others against it. That such was the popular opinion in very ancient times we learn from the 30th chapter of Genesis, in which we are informed that Jacob, in order to render the cattle striped, speckled, and spotted, placed peeled

rods before the eyes of the females in the act of copulation; and in modern days has been supported by Meckel, Soemmering, Breschet, Serres, and Geoffrey St. Hilaire; while, on the contrary, it has been disputed by many tutors on midwifery, and amongst the latter by myself, who drew my conclusions in consequence of being cognizant of many cases of women having been exposed to mental disturbance and unpleasant sights without any effect on their offspring, but I am now converted to the opposite opinion from numerous incontrovertible facts which have come lately within the range of my own observation. The *modus operandi* I do not intend to explain; but Geoffrey St. Hilaire, who has written largely on the subject, attributes monstrocities and deformities to long continued pressure on the abdomen of the mother, or to the fact of her having been exposed to long continued mental emotions. Now in the case I am about to relate, a passing thought arising from the sight of a deformed child, and which thought was forgotten for months, was sufficient, in a woman in the sixth week of pregnancy, to lop off two arms from the child she was then bearing, exactly corresponding with the deformity which existed in the child she saw. The following are the particulars of the case:—Mrs. C—of Little Moorfields, of average stature, sound health, and between 25 and 30 years of age, was confined with her second child on the 10th June, 1850. Her first labor was tedious and severe, in consequence of which the infant was stillborn, but without deformity. In this instance the labor was both easy and natural, and the child, which was a fine healthy boy, was found to be well developed in every respect, except that it was deficient of both arms. On each side the glenoid

PLANING A PIECE OF WOOD



W I T H I S F E E T .

cavity and acromion process of the scapula may be plainly felt, but there is not the most rudimentary trace of a humerus.

On being shown her infant and the deformity pointed out, she made the following statement:—

“That she was one day walking down the Minories when she met a child without arms, and similiar in every way to her own; that she was horrified at the sight, but that she had entirely forgotten the occurrence, and that this happened about the sixth week of pregnancy, when she was in doubt whether she was in the family way or not.”

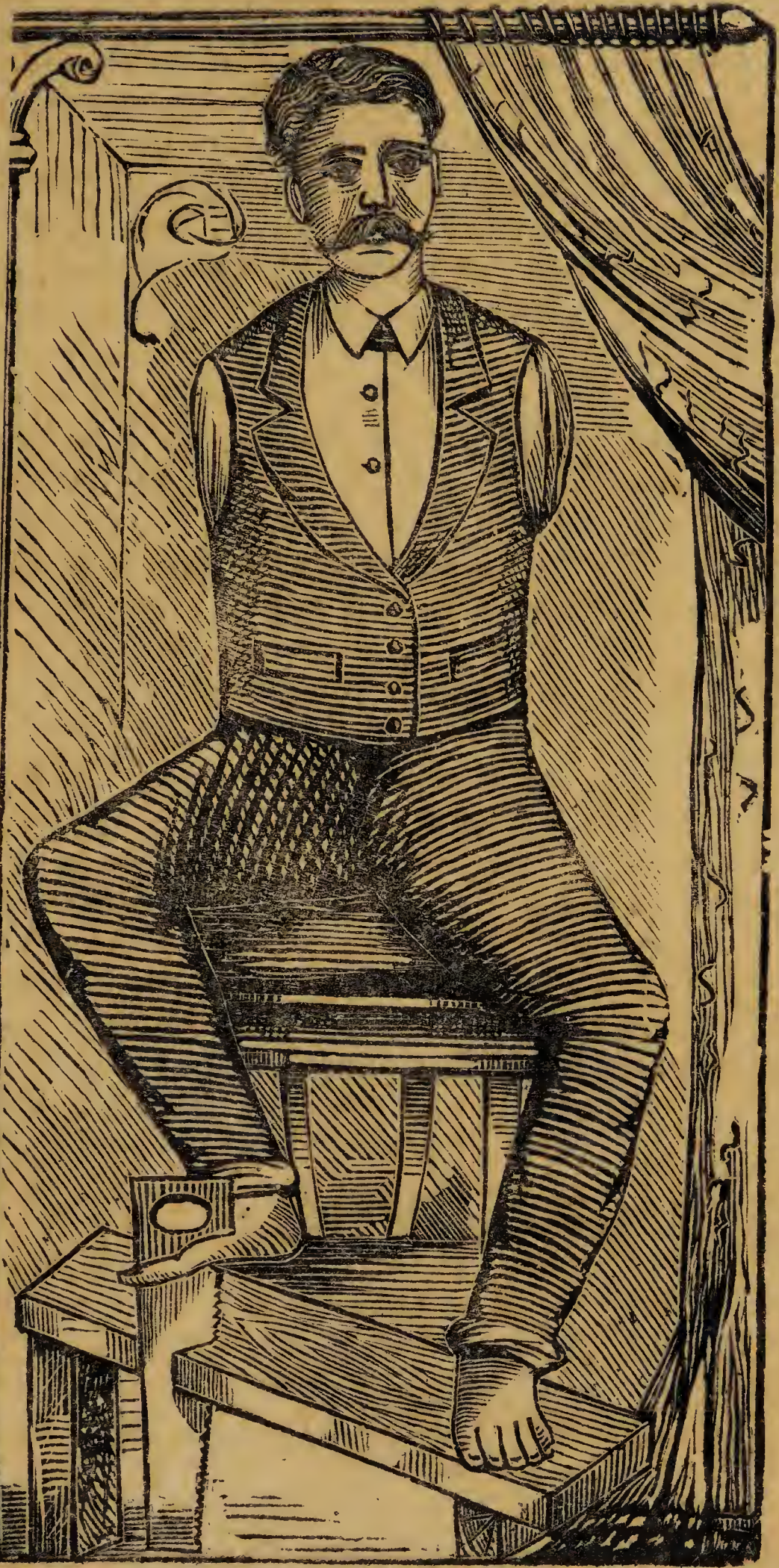
A non-professional gentleman to whom I mentioned the circumstance informs me that this child is to be seen any day in the Minories, showing its deformity to the passers by.

I would here beg to observe that it is both cruel and disgraceful to allow this child to run at large without its being properly clothed, so as to hide its deformity; because inasmuch as it has been sufficient to effect one pregnant woman, there is no reason why it should not similarly effect hundreds of other women out of the thousands and tens of thousands which pass along that great thoroughfare; and it must be confessed that the loss of both arms to those who have to obtain their living by their own handiwork is a most serious and lamentable affliction.

I am, Sir, yours truly,

R. DAVIES, M.R.C.S.

SAWING A PIECE OF WOOD



WITH HIS FEET.

While yet an infant, only a few months old, it was seen by his watchful mother he tried to get at different things with his feet, therefore they were left uncovered, and he was encouraged in this way and as he grew up he came to use them as naturally as other children did their hands, and without much extra training from those around him.

His parents were very anxious he should have a good education, and therefore at the age of ten he was placed at a large public school in the North of London, where he remained for some time doing his studies the same as the other scholars, only using his feet instead of his hands, and carrying off most of the prizes term after term.

At the present time he can do almost anything required of him. He can take off and put on the lock of a door or box, and many such things about his house. He has for years past carried the street door key and let himself in; and last though not least, J. C., is a married man with a large family of little ones, varying in age from 14 to 2 years, all perfect and intelligent children.

